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ZEITGEIST

by DIRK JELLEMA*

An increasing number of people, from different vantage-points and outlooks, have been saying that there are trends in American life which are bringing about a new set of ideas, a new *Zeitgeist*, which is different from the ideas and outlook which formerly dominated American life. This new *Zeitgeist* which is emerging and may become dominant is the subject here. I shall first outline it: then consider its effects in ideas of politics and such things: and finally examine its outlook on religion and its possible effect on our own church.

This new *Zeitgeist*, as some of those who are writing on it do not seem to realize, is the same which emerged in Europe around 1900 and became prominent after World War I. It might be suggested as a possibility, and as yet a possibility only, that what we are actually going through is a real shift in mind, as important as the shift from Graeco-Roman outlook to Christianity in the 200's, or the shift from Christianity to a secularized-scientific outlook around 1650.

Most of what follows will be from my own observations, particularly on the students I have had in Oregon, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Ohio. These observations fit in well with the analysis of David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, 1950, which can be purchased in Anchor Books for 95c at any good bookstore: with the analysis of European trends by Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (available for 40c from Mentor Books, 501 Madison Ave., New York 22); and with the increasing number of less solid things dealing with this problem, or change in *Zeitgeist.*

Thus, consider *Time*, Nov. 5, 1951, on "The Younger Generation": "youth's ambitions have shrunk" . . . "there is the feeling that it is neither desirable nor practical to do things that are different from what the next fellow is doing" . . . "Said a girl in Minneapolis, 'the individual is almost dead today, but the young people are unaware of it . . . they are not individuals but parts of groups. They are unhappy outside of groups. They date in foursomes and sixsomes.'" . . . "Intellectually, today's young people already seem a bit stodgy." . . . "God is only a vaguely comforting thought, theology a waste of time . . . but the younger generation is looking for a faith: it feels the need to believe . . . the only heroes are the ones they can't destroy; and who are those? The heroes of the comic strips."

Consider William H. Whyte, an editor of *Fortune*, writing in the *Saturday Review* (Oct. 31, 1953): "the new illiteracy is nourished by several simple articles of faith. The essence of them is this: First, the individual exists only as a member of a group. He fulfills himself only as he works with others; of himself he is nothing. His tensions, his frustrations — these are penalties for his failure at adjustment, and they should be excused . . . above all, he must *get along.*" . . . "we asked a number of trainees (at Monsanto Chemical Co.) how they thought a genius like Steinmetz would fit in today (with Monsanto's team research). 'We could straighten out his unfortunate characteristics' was the reply . . . the belief is growing that the health of our society depends on increasing adjustment of the individual to the consensus of the group; and this is not simply an unwitting yen for conformity, but a philosophy, a philosophy advocated by a sizeable proportion of the leadership in each sector of our society. These people are not pioneers; they are not a small band of revolutionaries working against the grain of our culture. Their doctrine is now orthodoxy."

Or, consider the ideas of Dr. Robert Lindner, professional penal psychologist (*Time*, Dec. 6, 1954): he sees the new *Zeitgeist* producing a severe collective mental illness. "Youth today has abandoned solitude in favor of

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pack-running, of predatory assembly, of great collectivities that bury, if they do not destroy, individuality. Into these mindless associations the young flock like cattle. The fee they pay for initiation is abandonment of self and immersion in the herd . . . we can no longer regard the mutiny of youth ((juvenile delinquency)) as a transient perversity that time will cure . . . (they represent rather) the shape of things to come, as models of an emergent type of humanity . . . (there is) nothing which does not require the young to conform, to adjust, to submit . . . (our society) is infused with the rot-producing idea that the salvation of the individual, and so of society, depends on conformity and adjustment."

Or, consider S. Flowerman's report (*New York Times Magazine,* April 1950): "Portrait of the Authoritarian Man." Social psychologists in California made an extensive study of "social personalities," and concluded that "it can be said that about 10 per cent of the population of the United States consists of 'authoritarian' men and women, while as many as another 20 per cent have within them the seeds. . ." The leading characteristic of this type of person, according to the California study, is this: "He is a supreme conformist. The Authoritarian Man conforms to the n-th degree to middle class ideas and ideals, and to authority. But conforming is no voluntary act for him: it is compulsive and irrational. It is an attempt to find security by merging into the herd."

And such examples could be multiplied. From many different angles and outlooks, notice is being taken of the new *Zeitgeist.* From my own dealings with college students, I would say that this new *Zeitgeist* is a fact, and is a trend, and that even in the educationally select group which goes on to college, one out of four will (if pressed) express his belief in the axioms of the new *Zeitgeist.* I might further add that if this new *Zeitgeist* becomes dominant (as it perhaps already has in Europe), democracy as we have known it will vanish, and individualism as we have known it will vanish: our standard of living, of course, will not vanish. There is some fear that the society portrayed in George Orwell's 1984, or Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit* 451, may come about: the mass-man, the herd-man, his every action dictated even as he mouths meaningless phrases about the American way of life; a man who, though surrounded by Cadillacs, TV sets, modern furniture and all the rest, is in many respects a slave.

This *Zeitgeist* has been developing for some time: the thing that is alarming with the post-war generation is that roughly one out of four college students will consciously defend this *Zeitgeist.* Among the post-war youth who do not go on to college (*i.e.,* the majority), the proportion would be higher.

WELL, what is this new outlook, this new *Zeitgeist,* these new assumptions? The authors quoted above give some indication: one key idea is "adjustment" (or integration, or getting along in society, or team-play, or group living). But this is only part of the answer. Riesman and Ortega come closer to a complete answer. It seems to me that this new *Zeitgeist* is based on the following basic assumptions, which have been evolving for some time, and are now coming to open expression. And, I might add, not only "out there" or "in the world" or "in worldly circles": they are also beginning to exert a bad influence in our own church. Such assumptions, then, are the following.

The nature of man is basically technological: that is, man is distinguished from the animals not by his culture (as the Greeks said) nor by his reason and science (as the Enlightenment said) nor by his religion (as the Middle Ages and the Reformation said), but by his technology.

This implies that *the aim of society is a higher standard of living,* since man can express his nature only in technology and the enjoyment of the fruits of technology. We (and thus society) should be basically interested in a higher material standard of living (though we may continue to believe in culture or religion or mathematics, if we are so inclined; but they are not basic). Thus culture becomes irrelevant: and religion takes a subsidiary position (which we will examine later): and even science is "good" or "valuable" only insofar as it produces technology.

Further, *the good life is defined in materialistic terms.* We have the good life because we have TV sets (not because we have freedom). We are more advanced than all previous ages because we have technology (not because we have a better culture or better religion or even better science). Good and bad societies are distinguished according to how high their standard of living

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is (Russia is bad because Russians don have Fords) (we are better than Eu rope because Europeans don't hav good plumbing).

This means, as a logical consequenc which the post-war generation is quic to draw, that *good is defined in term of a high standard of living.* And th means, in terms of a society, tha "good" means whatever will raise th standard of living (*not* what will in crease freedom, or whatever). And th means for the individual that *good defined as that which helps me rais my own standard of living* (thus Lati is no good, while courses in group li ing are good). Now, this seems t many within the new *Zeitgeist* to be bit too narrow: so it is often expanded t *good is that which helps give me higher standard of living and emotion security* (it doesn't matter what you b lieve, just so you believe; dogma is u important, emotion is important; b lieve in God because it helps us ga peace of mind; adjusting to the grou is basic because it gives emotional s curity).

If that is what "good" means, wh does "truth" mean? Well, truth actually rather unimportant, unless helps raise the standard of living, c gives emotional security: otherwise is not "good." Truth is relative: th only "true" truth is that which hel raise the standard of living or giv emotional security. Two things th are obviously and importantly "true

e thus: *technology*, and *whatever my oup believes* (for if I believe this too, will have more emotional security). hus, whether democracy is true or not a question which has meaning only if phrased in this way: does democracy lp a high standard of living and does y group believe in it. And obviously, e same is true of morals. It is furthmore clear that except for technology, hich clearly raises the SOL, there are real objective truths which are bindg on everyone, for truth is defined "that which my group believes in," that truth for an Indonesian (except r techonlogy) will be completely difrent from truth for us.

Thus, ask a student whether he ould have favored the Renaissance, d he has difficulty understanding the uestion. "It depends on what group belonged to" or "If they believed in then it was good." Were Luther's eas true? "For him, they were." re they for you? "Well, if we believe in them today, sure." Do we believe in them today? "I'm not sure. They sound kind of radical." Were they better than our ideas? "Oh, no. Our ideas are better, because they've produced a high standard of living." Should we be Christians? "Well, it's a good thing. It helps you get ahead."

IT is to this new *Zeitgeist* that McCarthy can speak (conform conform conform to the group), and that Billy Graham can appeal (Jesus gives you emotional security), and inter-faith projects (for all religions are equally true if they give emotional security, and the welfare state (which gives security) and free-enterprise capitalism (which raises the SOL) at the same time, and contemporary advertising (don't be left out, buy Gaggles Cigarettes, be accepted by the group), and contempt for culture (teachers are no good, they don't make much), and movies, TV and radio (heroism is success, the ideal man is the junior executive: security plus a high SOL), and disrespect for much of science (eggheads: impractical: ridiculous) as opposed to technicians (who raise our standard of living, rather than digging up old bones or dealing with Cantorian trans-finite numbers).

Next time we'll examine in more detail some of the forms and attitudes this new *Zeitgeist* brings about: and after that, consider how it affects religion in America, and our own church. For a more detailed discussion from a completely different angle, I refer you again to David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, (Anchor Books), available for 95c from any good bookstore. We might warn you in advance that reading that book will *not* raise your standard of living, and will *not* help give you emotional security: all it will do is help you understand the new *Zeitgeist* and its effect on America.

Our Mission:
The Communication of Life

DICK L. VAN HALSEMA*

THERE is a happy rise of interest ese days in the world-wide mission the Christian Church. With this newal of interest goes a fresh reppraisal of mission principles and poli-es. In this article there are discussed me of the basic issues concerning ristian Reformed home missions in rticular.

The entire denomination probably nows about the current discussion of ission methods. For example, Synod 1955 will have to consider a fourar-old question concerning the proper ganization and administration of the ission work for which our churches e responsible. There is much debate out mission methods also in evangelm.

We must take care not to become imarily pre-occupied with the matter missions methodology. One-sided nphasis upon methods is dangerous. s the late Samuel Zwemer asserted a familiar volume, the secret of hristian missions is to concentrate on e "message, not method" (see *Evanelism Today: Message, not Method*). It is from this same conviction that the present article is written. What is said here concerns itself mainly with the Christian mission message, out of which directives for methods may be derived with arresting clarity. Since the Church of Jesus Christ has only one mission, what is said here applies equally well to all areas where the Gospel is preached, both at home and abroad.

The Mission of the Church

GO . . . preach" — that is the assignment given to the Church by Christ. This responsibility is defined in the Great Commission: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20). The last phrase actually reminds us that Christ remains the center and the sender of the Christian missions. By His Word and Spirit, it is He Who through His body on earth is carrying out the reclamation of men dead in trespasses and sins.

Scripture provides a clear clue to the character and aim of the Christian mission. This work of Christ through His Church on earth for the reclamation of spiritually dead mankind is actually the *Communication of Life* — a concept surprisingly fruitful in its application to the practical problems and methods of Christian missions. Qualifications might be suggested in reference to this view of the Christian mission. However, many of these observations actually are explicatory rather than contradictory to this concept, since they elaborate the basic truth of this Scriptural idea. Is not this idea the point of Jesus' words to Nicodemus, the night visitor: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16)? That is the heart of the Christian mission. Again, hear Jesus say to the Pharisees, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:11b). Jesus, once sent by the Father into this world, now seated at the Father's right hand, came for the purpose of *communicating* life to the sheep. By this impartation of life men

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are saved and the Church is enlarged.

When these elements — the assignment "Go . . . preach" and the understanding of the Christian mission as the *communication* of life — are taken together, we arrive at a fresh appreciation of their intrinsic unity. *To preach the Gospel is to communicate life* (Romans 1:16). Here are found both the character and the aim of the Christian mission. In this sense, it becomes clearer why our basic concern is with message, not method.

The foregoing has immediate implications in various ways for the preaching of the Word. In its broadest sense, "preaching the Gospel" includes the literal pronouncement of the Word by the messenger (minister-missionary), the living embodiment of the Word in the daily conduct of the congregation, and the inseparable connection between the two aspects. The one refers specifically to those who succeed the apostles as ministers, the other refers particularly to all members of the body of Christ. *Both* are caught up in the task of the Christian mission, not merely because of some externally-imposed assignment to engage in a particular kind of public speaking or behavior, but because in both resides the Living Christ. He is the Living Word. And where the Living Word resides, *there* is the abundant life.

The Primacy of Preaching

We are familiar with the Scripture's emphasis upon the role of the preached Word in the communication of eternal life. The primary assignment is still, "Go . . . preach." Paul was given divine insight to perceive and to experience this fact in his missionary ministry. This is evident from his familiar words, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach . . . For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek . . . for, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent" (Romans 10:8, 11-15)? This literal preaching is the task of the ministers, who are appointed to the dual function of missionary (heralding forth the evangel) and of teacher (instucting the congregation in the wonders of God's counsel and His covenant).

In their heralding and teaching the ministers present eternal truth, not only because they present the inspired Word spoken by angels and by prophets and by apostles, but because they themselves are being used by God's ascended Son in the impartation of His life. In every Spirit-blessed presentation of the Word by faithful herald-teachers, Christ reveals the Way, the Truth, and the Life. That is, Christ shows Himself. The Living Word, He *is* the Way. He, the True Way, brings Life. Paul writes to Timothy, "God . . . saved us and called us . . . in Christ Jesus . . . who abolished death and *brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (II Timothy 1:8-11, *passim*). The new life, in and from Christ, reclaiming the sinner from death and establishing him in the Truth, brings joy, peace, and love. The Great Prophet's announcement of redemption brings joy. The Chief High Priest's words of pardon bring peace. The Only King's sovereign condescension to redeem, awakens love.

Yes, the literal proclamation of the Word is central in the Christian mission. Apart from it, the daily preaching of the congregation as body of Christ, by "kindly words and virtuous life," loses not only its orientation but also its living quality. This literal preaching is absolutely fundamental and essential.

The Performance of the Congregation

The larger dimension of "preaching the Word" is also necessary, however. This larger aspect is the embodiment of the Word in the daily life of the congregation, the living body of Christ. The role of the congregation in this respect is no formal, external assignment. Its warrant lies deep within the very life of the Christian. To him, *life has been communicated.* Life has been communicated to him by Christ — even through His Word and Spirit. This life now finds its daily expression in embodying forth precisely what was communicated to him in terms of real joy, peace, and love. Preaching finds its final fulfilment in performance. The literal, basic preaching of the herald-teacher has been heard, and it brought life. Now this preaching of the minister becomes em bodied, it is put to use, in the practi of Christ's people. *Now the preachi will be seen.*

Let us not think that this living em bodiment of the preaching is only minor or optional part of the tot mission of the Christian Church. Ha we not heard Christ when He said, " are the light of the world. . . . Even let your light shine before men; *th they may see* your good works, a glorify your Father who is in heave (Matthew 5:14a, 16)? And how cle ly the element of daily practice is se in these words: "A new commandme I give unto you, that ye love one a other; even as I have loved you, th ye also love one another. *By this sh all men know* that ye are my disciple if ye have love one for another" (Jo 13:34-35). Even Paul had this mind. See how he tells the Christia at Corinth, "Ye are our epistle, writt in our hearts, known and read of men; being made manifest that ye a an epistle of Christ, ministered by written not with ink, but with the Sp it of the living God; not in tables stone, but in tables that are hearts flesh" (II Corinthians 3:2-3).

What we are saying is that missio is the work of Christ in the commu cating of life to men. This impartati wrought by the Holy Spirit, comes p marily through preaching. This prea ing, in a most real sense, involves congregation as well as the herald-tea er. *For all the world to see,* the Chr tian community must embody j Themselves prophets, only members the body of Christ can sing that " has come to the world, because Lord is come." *For all men to obser* those whose life is hid with Christ God will embody peace. Themsel priests, only they can give evidence genuine peace who have heard the Gr High Priest say, "My son, be of go cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." *all the world to see,* Christians m embody love. Themselves kings, o they can love in truth whose lives ha come completely under the influence Christ's sovereign love. To embody j to give evidence of peace, to love this is the congregation's "preachin this is the congregation's mission. this, the literal preaching finds fu ment in daily performance. By t all men shall know that we are Chri disciples.

It can be observed, therefore, that missions (understood as the commu

ation of life) there is a very close onnection between the preaching and ie performance of the Word. Both ave to do with presenting to the hu-ian race the Way of Life in Christ, the Way to joy, peace, and love. The close-ess between Word and Life suddenly ppears in new vividness when we read ohn's prologue to his Gospel. Christ, ie Word, *is* Life itself. Before the istorical incarnation this is true. But, nly because "the Word became flesh" ould John say, "*and we beheld* his lory" (John 1:14). In what herald-eacher and congregation say and do oday, men must still behold the glory f the Living Christ.

Inseparability of Preaching and Performance

UPON the basis of what has een said, observe that ministerial and ongregational responsibilities are com-lementary in carrying out the Chris-an mission. If either the primacy of reaching or the need for congregation-l embodiment of that preaching is eglected, trouble results. As example f what happens when preaching is rele-ated to an insignificant role is fur-ished by the history of the Young len's Christian Association in this ountry. Although not a church, the MCA was introduced to the United tates from England in 1851 as a spe-ifically evangelistic agency. Within a ecade, over two hundred "Y" associa-ons had been organized in cities roughout the nation. In annual re-orts, these associations told of thou-ands of conversions. Street meetings ere held, Bible classes were organized, nd the now-familiar urban house-to-ouse mission canvass for the first time as developed (1866). At the begin-ing of the twentieth century, the MCA was still synonymous with hristian evangelism. But, within wenty-five years, the identification of he "Y" with its original purpose had hanged radically. In place of evan-elism came community programs for nter-faith comradeship. In place of treet meetings and Bible classes came new emphasis upon sports and social ctivities. What had happened was hat, in an attempt to make fellowship nd brotherhood more central than the asic Christian message, the latter dis-ppeared with startling completeness. he tragedy of this is clearly read not nly in the history of an association, ut even more graphically in thousands f American Protestant congregations. Disparagement of preaching is not only unwise; it is bound to be fatal.

However, we may be in danger of a different onesidedness — an imbalance in which the preaching is emphasized to the exclusion of its embodiment in the actual life of the congregation. When this occurs, there is preaching but little practice; there are words, but little life. In such an arid environment, the Christian mission cannot flourish. If begun at all, it will remain a feeble plant at best. To congregations where such one-sidedness is present, faithful herald-teachers must constantly present the Scriptural picture of, and incontrovertible need for, the body of Christ as an active and performing community. Again and again there will have to be stressed the call to a living faith and an active love, in terms which will make all men know about the Lord Jesus Christ. This will mean new study of the Scriptures, new devotion, new sacrifices, but especially a tremendous change in how Christians behave and how they treat one another. Strangers to the life that is in Christ and in His body on earth (who are often termed "outsiders") will not be drawn to what is cold or inactive. Only what is living will attract. Only what is warm with joy, peace, and love will satisfy. And, only the congregation where such can be seen is fit for the Master's use.

Church history, particularly that of the Reformed family of churches, furnishes striking examples of what occurs to churches in which preaching is glorified to the exclusion of the practice of joy, peace, and love. Such churches cannot be mission churches. Such churches fail to communicate life. Such churches, cold or luke-warm at best, finally die — except they "repent and do the first works" (Revelation 2:5). Both preaching and the embodiment of its living message in the daily conduct of the body of Christ are essential to the communication of life, which is the heart of the Christian mission.

The Nucleus

THE present context affords an excellent setting in which to consider the familiar discussion about the place of the "nucleus" in the Christian mission. In short, an understanding of missions as the communication of life leaves no doubt as to the absolute indispensability of the nucleus. Any assertion to the contrary is indicative of a faulty concept of the Christian mission. The only question in terms of nucleus concerns its size, not its necessity.

The term "nucleus" is in many ways a happy one in describing the work of missions. A nucleus is a basic organism which not only possesses life but also is able to impart, or communicate, its life. In missions, the term "nucleus" may be applied to all the regenerated among men, through whom as "living organisms" Christ is pleased to carry on His redemptive work of communicating eternal life. At once it becomes clear that such a mission "nucleus" can be either one person or a thousand, *a single missionary or an entire congregation.* Gustav Warneck, important nineteenth century figure in mission theology, illustrates this point in his *Missions and Culture.* Referring to the many-sided life of the missionary in a foreign community, Warneck points out that the missionary at first will be postmaster as well as preacher, merchant as well as minister, carpenter as well as catechist. Actually, when a single missionary is sent out, Christ embodies in him all the essentials of congregation, consistory, diaconate, and minister (see editorial of H. J. Kuiper in a *Banner* issue of a few years ago on the implications of our form for ordination of missionaries). In the beginning of a work and all alone, *the missionary himself is the nucleus* (from this point of view, re-study the missionary work of Paul). At first, he is the body of Christ, the congregation-to-be in miniature. This status, of course, is derived solely from the missionary's relationship to Christ. Only in Christ is the missionary all these things (for "Christ is all, and in all," Colossians 3:11b).

On the other hand, it must be remembered that no matter how large a Christian group becomes, it remains a nucleus, too. Wherever Christ is present — in one or ten or thousands, *there* is a nucleus, because *there* is true life. The largest congregation has one simple mission: to impart life by the work of Christ within and through it. A failure to comprehend this clear truth is one explanation for comparative inaction in some congregations. There can be no debate as to whether or not the church should communicate life. To communicate life is the church's *raison d'etre.*

A Look at Home Missions Problems

MANY problems confronting the Christian Reformed Church in respect to home missions strategy may be clar-

ified in terms of the nucleus factor. For example, the question is not any longer whether it is right or wrong to have home missionaries follow up nuclei of Reformed Christians who gather in new areas. Neither is it a question of whether it is Scriptural or un-Scriptural to send a lone missionary into the nation's one hundred largest urban centers. The question is rather one of basic understanding of what Christ is doing in communicating life through His body upon earth and how this living family spreads and is brought into being in new places. It is a question of prayerfully appraising the hundreds of challenges which confront the Church and of concluding to which of these areas it is timely and wise to give priority. In drawing such conclusions on matters of strategy and choice of fields, all factors will be considered — especially the need of the new area and the size and health of the nucleus which will be employed.

Ordinarily, a congregation will lose no time in extending its preaching and life in any area where a maturing nucleus of member families already resides. It will do this instead of ignoring such a nucleus in favor of farther-removed "challenging fields," where at first the working nucleus would consist only of one person — the missionary. The same reasoning applies to denominational strategy.

It appears that a basic understanding must be reached among us as to what constitutes a "challenging field." There are instances in which a congregation or a denomination definitely will be awakened by Christ to see a challenge away from home (either in our own country or abroad) which requires the initial planting of the nucleus in person of the missionary (perhaps, with his family). This has been the case when missionaries have gone to cities and lands where the Gospel had not been preached. This is still true whenever missionaries are sent to places where the Church has not been planted. As Christ guides the Christian Reformed part of His Church, we will follow into such fields too.

However, this way of growth must not be conceived of as the basic *norm* for home missions advance, any more than pre-occupation with larger nuclei of exclusively Dutch-descent, Reformed families can be justified on the grounds of a single norm. *Both ways* are used by Christ. Actually, it is more true to say that these "ways" essentially are one. They are intrinsically one simply because missions is the way by which the Living Jesus communicates eternal life through nuclei *large and small.*

What about "Church Extension" and "Evangelization"?

AN UNDERSTANDING of the Christian mission as the communication of life and a re-discovery of the importance of the nucleus concept may make irrelevant much of our debate over the distinction between "church extension" and "evangelization." The two may connote different aspects, but they are inseparable. For all practical purposes, they are one. This is not to confuse the issue or to say that the present administrative pattern of Christian Reformed missions, both foreign and domestic, needs no revision. That is not implied here. But this is to say that there is one Christ, Who has assigned one mission to His body upon earth: the mission of communicating the one eternal life. The church extends in order to evangelize. Yet, both the extending and the evangelizing are healthy signs of the one abundant life.

No one can hesitate to prosecute with all vigor the work of strengthening and of bringing to maturity new nuclei of Christian families any more than one can hesitate to preach the good news of life in Christ to millions of spiritually-dead men. An energetic manufacturer seeks both to broaden his base of supply and to produce more goods: these are simply twin aspects of a single aim. In a much more important quest, the Church wants increasingly to be of usefulness to Christ as He communicates life to men through nuclei large and small. We rejoice to see the increase in numbers of both individual Christians and congregations. We rejoice because through both types of nucleus the Living Word reaches men in ever-growing numbers.

Preaching is the means par excellence by which the Word takes up its residence in the hearts of men. Therefore, when the decision is made definitely to enter a new field, whether in Grand Rapids suburbs, New Orleans, or Edmonton, that entrance will be made with the preaching of the Word from the very beginning. And, where new Christians are brought into life by the Word and Spirit of Jesus Christ, in that very place the confirming sacraments will be administered. Preaching indeed is pr mary, but it may be by the performanc of true love that the majority of me first shall know that we are Christ's di ciples and thus come to know of Hi How imperative, then, that every Chri tian and every congregation dedica themselves to a new practice of hosp tality, charity, and compassion for a men, beginning with the household faith.

When the nucleus has grown to in tial maturity and is sufficiently differe tiated in terms of members, it is read to be recognized for what it has becom — a congregation. The aim of th Christian mission is to bring into b ing the Church of Jesus Christ. B cause the communication of life is th obligation of every new congregatio maturity — not prolonged minori status — is the goal. The perpetuatio of nuclei as "branch churches" or "mi sion chapels" fails to find warrant the Scriptures.

Every Christian is a nucleus. Eve missionary and every minister is nucleus. Every congregation is a nu leus. The entire church universal, this context, is a great nucleus: it po sesses, it must communicate life. A the body of Christ is called to be t means by which He shall impart t true life. If this is true, no long should the "question" of lay worke puzzle anyone. The Christian Reform Church alone has more than one hu dred thousand lay workers — as ma lay workers as there are mature me ber nuclei. The question is not ho many lay workers are to be employ in home missions. All of our lay wo ers are to be employed. It is simply matter of deciding how many of the lay workers, as aides to ordained me we ought to pay for full-time work.

In ancient Greece, a band of soldie or colonists sent to some distant sho in order to extend their ruler's sw were considered as "sojourners in foreign land." The Greek word for t phrase, translated into English, is t word "parish." A parish — is there better picture to be found of the m sion of the Church on this earth? O sojourning here is that of a "parish for a high and sacred purpose. Th is why we preach, ". . . the free g of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus o Lord" (Romans 6:23b). The messa states our mission: to communicate th life to men. A recovery of our missi in terms of "parish" will have profou and happy results.

Literature and Dogma

by HENRY ZYLSTRA

If you really want to get at the spirit of an age and the soul of a time you can hardly do better than to consult the literature of that age and that time. In the novels and stories and poems and plays of a period you have a good indication of what, deep down, that period was about. I am thinking now, of course, of the real literature, the honest and soul-searching literature, the valid and undissimulating literature. I am not thinking of the quantities of drug store fiction, sure-fire Broadway hits, "slick" magazine stories, or of the tons of synthetic entertainment and pastime books in which people in our time seem determined to hide from themselves and their problems.

But of that significant literature of any period it can certainly be said that it is as a face on which the soul of the time is written. Thus, if you want to know the very quality of the Western mind when the Middle Ages had broken up but the new world of the Baconian science had not yet defined itself, you do well to look to the plays of Shakespeare. Or, more specifically, if you would like to know whether the Reformation sense of sin and guilt did not sometimes break through that Renaissance sense of the goodness of man and the world, you do well to study the *Hamlet*.

And so it is of the literature of other times and places. That exuberant hope, for example, which the romanticists entertained, namely, that things would change and the revolution would come if only an intuitive *Vernunft* were substituted for a rationalistic *Verstand*, is it not written plain and large in the book of Goethe's *Faust*, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and Emerson's *Essays?* Or, again, if you want to see, a little later in the nineteenth century, what becomes of both the *Verstand, i.e.*, the Enlightenment, and the *Vernunft, i.e.*, the romantic idealism, you can again turn to literature as the barometer for gauging the spiritual weather. Arnold, for instance, who had hoped that the spirit and values of Christianity could be maintained after its dogmatic supports had been destroyed, is very pessimistic in his "Dover Beach":

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy long withdrawing roar. . . .

Tennyson, too, felt the old certainties faltering as Strauss and Renan and Feuerbach came in the wake of Voltaire and substituted something called science for faith. Tennyson tried to cling to both but he had his troubles:

We have but faith; we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust. . . .

A generation later these fading certainties of Arnold and Tennyson, of Fitzgerald and James Thomson, become the total disillusionment of and despondency of Hardy and Housman. The century that had come in so bouyantly with Wordsworth saying "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive" goes out with God saying in Hardy's poem "A Plaint to Man":

. . . I dwindle day by day
Beneath the deicide eye of seers
In a light that will not let me stay.

Not only did God for Hardy thus pine away under the glaring scrutiny of science: He died while under examination, and Hardy buried Him in his poem called "God's Funeral."

This same Thomas Hardy, deeply despondent, wrote his poem "The Darkling Thrush" on the eve of the 1900's. On a disagreeably dank day and in a dismally bleak surrounding, symbolic both of them of the spiritual morale at century's end, the doughty little bird with its "blast beruffled plume" hurls its gay song upon the air. Hardy heard it, and wrote:

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

Such was the culmination of the scientific liberalism and the romantic liberalism of the nineteenth century; such was the end of the Rationalistic and Idealistic efforts. Both of these offshoots of Renaissance humanism — the Enlightenment, *die Aufklarung*, on the hand, and the Idealism, *die Romantiek*, on the other—continue green and alive in our own time, it is true. But it cannot be said that they are thriving. Both of them flourished in a climate of humanism; both of them came up out of the dogma of the natural goodness of man. And it is precisely on this fundamental level of religious assumption that our century is beginning to change from its predecessors.

If the witness of a large and important segment of the contemporary literature is to be trusted at all, we can say that the dogmatic change now being realized in our western world is a bigger change than took place when the *Verstand* of the age of Voltaire became the *Vernunft* of the age of Goethe. The difference is bigger than the difference between Rationalism and Romanticism. Those two differed significantly from each other, for they were not identical twins. But in the end the common parentage of Renaissance humanism and the family trait of the natural goodness of man outweigh the individual differences in the scale of importance. We can call the two by the common name of Liberalism. And in speaking now of an important spiritual change from it, we can call it a change from Liberalism to Religion.

* * *

To say that the contemporary literature indicates a change in basic assumptions so fundamental as that expressed by the difference between Liberal Man and Religious Man is to put forward a big claim about an important matter, and some warrant for it must be given. There follows, accordingly, some account of a few of the more representative literary witnesses to the changing dogmatic climate in our twentieth century world.

One of the first men of letters of our age to distinguish between what he called the religious attitude and the humanist attitude was Mr. T. E. Hulme. The work of this influential young Englishman, consisting for the most part of literary and general philosophical criticism, and also of some Imagist

Literature and Dogma —Continued

poems, was, after his death in battle during World War I, collected and published in a book called *Speculations.* As early as 1912 he addressed a group at Cambridge, England, on the subject "Anti-Romanticism and Original Sin." He felt that a shift in attitude from Romantic pride to Classical humility was overdue.

Hulme discriminated but two periods in the history of our West:

> *The first . . . is that of the Middle Ages in Europe — from Augustine, say, to the Renaissance; the second from the Renaissance to now. The ideology of the first period is religious; of the second, humanist.*

By the religious attitude he meant the humility proper to radical human imperfection; and by the humanist attitude he meant the pride of disposing of absolute standards and accepting life as the measure of all values. The modern mind for him was essentially one mind from its beginnings in the humanist or "natural goodness" attitude:

> *In spite of its extreme diversity, all philosophy since the Renaissance is at bottom the same philosophy. . . . The obvious diversity is only that of the various species of the same genius. . . . It all rests on the same conception of the nature of man, and exhibits the same inability to realize the meaning of the dogma of Original Sin.*

What is particularly interesting in Hulme is the way in which he struggled with the problem of destroying in the mind of the humanist "the conviction that his own attitude is the inevitable attitude of the emancipated and instructed man." He recommended for this what he called the historical method. Since this method comes pretty close to defining what we all mean when we say that Christian higher education is necessary for disenthralling ourselves from the modern mind, we educators in all kinds may care to take special note of it:

> *I think that history is necessary in order to* emancipate *the individual from certain* pseudo-categories. *We are all of us under the influence of a number of abstract ideas, of which we are as a matter of fact unconscious. We do not see them, but see other things* through *them. . . . Just as a knowledge of the colours extended and separated in the spectrum enables us to distinguish the feebler colours confused together in the shadows, so a knowledge of these ideas, as it were* objectified, *and* extended *in history enables us to perceive them hidden in our own minds. Once they have been brought to the surface of the mind, they lose their* inevitable *character. They are no longer categories. We have lost our* naivete.

* * *

A WRITER of much greater scope than Hulme, who has taken Hulme's cue, and who talks what is almost Hulme's language, is Mr. Wystan H. Auden. This distinguished poet-critic, English by birth and breeding, but American now by citizenship, has put a good deal of his prose and some of his lyrical and dramatic poetry into the exposure of the Liberal mind. He had himself explored several of the avenues of this mind, for example, the Freudian, the Marxian, and the aesthetic, before entering upon the religious way. In 1941, however, he wrote in *The Intent of the Critic*:

> *. . . we are all agreed on one thing: that the times through which we are now living mark the end of a period which, for convenience, we can say began with the Renaissance . . . The statement, "Man is a fallen creature with a natural bias to do evil," and the statement, "Men are good by nature and made bad by society," are both presuppositions . . . If, as I do, you assent to the first, your art and politics will be very different from what they will be if you assent, like Rousseau or Whitman, to the second.*

Considerably influenced by the Danish Kierkegaard, Auden in 1944 wrote the Christmas oratorio *For the Time Being* in which there is a fine contrast between the positivistic, rationalistic, and presumably modern mind of Herod and the Christian realism of Simeon. In 1947, still moving in the wake of Kierkegaard, he wrote his play *The Age of Anxiety.* This title is sometimes taken in newspaper editorials and the popular press generally to refer to the fear in which people of our day live because of the atom and hydrogen bombs. It was not any such natural fear, of course, that Auden was thinking of, but a religious fear such as can hardly be generated within the compass of the liberal mind. And in that former work Auden wrote: "Because of His visitation, we may no longer desire God as if He were lacking: our redemption is no longer a question of pursuit but of surrender to Him . . . Therefore at every moment we pray that, following Him, we may depart from our anxiety into His peace."

The literary testament of Thomas Stearns Eliot is an even more formidable foe to the modern mind than is the work of Auden. It should be safe to say that, outside of Roman Catholic circles at least, Eliot's voice is the strongest lay voice that has been heard against Liberalism in our century. He has steadily affirmed the religious as distinguished from the humanist attitude, and he has effectively brought the post-Enlightenment and post-Romantic mentality to bay. Ever since giving out his *Ash Wednesday,* composed in the late twenties, he has, particularly in the poem sequence called *Four Quartets* and in his successive dramas, borne in upon the modern man the inescapability of religious choice.

In this achievement, it would seem that Dante and Pascal have influenced Eliot most, but there is in him something also of the newer existentialist religious awareness. Eliot thinks of the people of our late-Renaissance world as lost, Laodicean souls, evasive, hollow, undone, because they refuse to work out their redemption by a conscious choice of the will:

> *Our age is an age of moderate virtue*
> *And of moderate vice*
> *When men will not lay down the*
> *Cross*
> *Because they will not assume it.*
> *Yet nothing is impossible, nothing*
> *To men of faith and conviction.*
> *Let us therefore make perfect our*
> *will.*
> *O God, help us.*

Eliot's sense of the moral innocuousness and grey neutrality of people in what Auden calls "the late age" is confirmed also by such a literary critic as the English Mr. Derek S. Savage. In his book, *The Withered Branch,* which is interesting in itself as an estimate of modern literature viewed from a dogmatic vantage point, Mr. Savage delineates the liberal mind as

> *a* medium *mind, a mind which fears extremes and which therefore is predisposed towards compromise . . .*

The compromising tendency of liberalism causes it to give mental hostages both to the realm of ideals and to the world of affairs, but it is rooted in the latter and in a crisis it is the latter which proves the stronger. Liberalism is a half-hearted creed . . . making a gesture of more or less sincerity toward spiritual values . . . Those spiritual values, however, tend to become something rather less than the ultimate and therefore terrifying ones. The absolute is carefully excluded from the liberal way of life.

It is this kind of mentality, stopping well short of the ultimate and terrifying values, that Mr. Eliot has tried to reach and disturb. He speaks of the people who have it as unable to bear very much reality, and he tells us that such people

. . . constantly try to escape
From the darkness outside and within
By dreaming of systems so perfect
that no one will need to be good.

* * *

Auden and Eliot are by no means alone in this reassertion of the role of faith in life and literature. Their younger successors such as Anne Ridler, Sidney Keyes, John Heath-Stubbs, David Gascoyne, Norman Nicholson, and others, are also writers whose work comes from an acknowledged Christian belief. And what is one to say, in this quick account of the changing dogmatic temper of our time, of the massive Catholic literary witness in these decades of our century? The quality and scope of the work is staggering; a mere catalogue of the bigger names is itself impressive: Leon Bloy, Charles Peguy, St. John Perse, Georges Bernanos, Ernst Psichari, Paul Claudel, Francois Mauriac, Ignazio Silone, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, and many besides. Their work is nothing if it is not a spiritual protest to the fundamental bearings of the Renaissance mentality, that is, to the Baconian-Rousseauist moral world.

No, the names are not enough. A token paragraph at least must go to fleshing the skeleton of this powerful Catholic body of writing. Take Leon Bloy, for instance, whose life spanned the second half of the last and about two decades of our own century, and who has powerfully influenced so many contemporaries, Jacques and Raissa Maritain among them. If T. S. Eliot is right in saying that "the greatest proof for Christianity for others, is not how far a man can logically analyze his reasons for believing, but how far in practice he will stake his life on his belief," then Leon Bloy was a great soul winner for the Catholic faith. He was radically thoroughgoing about his conviction.

Deeply disillusioned by what his biographer, Emmanuela Polimeni, calls the spiritual dearth at the end of the nineteenth century and the inadequacy of the Balzacian conception of life, Bloy nevertheless before his death felt the "slight breeze" of a new spiritual discontent stirring in the twentieth century air:

A new current is at work among us . . . The intellectuals are in search of God, and many no longer fear to ask publicly and openly to know our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Pharisaism cannot contine to hold sway over men's minds, for the day is approaching when God will vomit from his mouth merely respectable Catholicism.

The fact is that one gets from the modern novels of Bernanos, Mauriac, and Graham Greene an exploration of moral evil and of good far beyond the ability of a liberal Hardy, Wells, or Huxley to delineate, and far beyond the range also of a naturalistic Ernest Hemingway or D. H. Lawrence.

Those, it will be understood, are but a representative few of the writers of our period who signalize unmistakably that in a considerable segment of the literary world a spiritual change is in progress. In fact, things have reached the point at which a person would hesitate to profess modern literature except he have a fairly good knowledge of theology. Hardly a book of criticism appears without its chapter or two on the knotty problem of literature and belief. Such terms as Natural Goodness, Original Sin, the Fall of Man, Creation, Grace, the Pelagian Heresy, and the like, weave in and out of literary discussion as familiarly as they did in the older theological treatises. Amos N. Wilder is right when he says in his book, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition*: "much of the Literary criticism of our time inevitably passes over into what can be called a theological level."

* * *

THE fact is that one goes nowadays for some of the best accounts of poetry and fiction, not to the literary journals, but to *The Hibbert Journal*, to *Theology Today*, and to *The Journal of Bible and Religion*. This is a sort of acknowledgement on the part of theologians and churchmen that there is a high religious vitality in modern literature and something also of a prophetic dimension. Professor Wilder goes so far as to suggest that the strongest Christian testimony of our years is coming from the laymen, not from the clergy. Such a man as C. S. Lewis, for instance, who writes those many arresting books of Christian apology, is professionally a literary historian, and by avocation a writer of religious romances. His friend, the late Mr. Charles Williams, was also a lay theologian. He wrote books on church history and doctrine, and produced, in addition to his poetry, a good half-dozen novels of religious phantasy.

So considerable and so effective has this anti-liberalism in modern letters become that it is already eliciting a reaction from those who want to continue in the way of scientific or romantic humanism. Thus the American critical weekly, *The Saturday Review*, is in its editorial position always either tacitly or expressively opposed to the returning dogmatic bases of life and literature. Thus, too, the English paper called *The Literary Outlook* vindicates its existence mainly by its opposition to the "new" religious attitude. One of the writers for the *Outlook* last year published a book called *The Emperor's Clothes*, the whole burden of which was that the new attitude posed the threat of "medieval" authoritarianism and benightedness. What bothered the author, Miss Kathleen Nott, was this:

. . . the writers whom I discuss and whom I call neo-scholastic . . . are reverting at various speeds and from various directions to a pre-scientific philosophy . . . Chief among the doctrines which they try to import into our intellectual outlook is the dogma of original sin, which is certainly the psychological foundation of Christian orthodoxy.

If it be granted, then, as Professor Wilder said, that "the creative, imaginative expressions are often our best clues to the diagnosis of men's hearts and the deeper movements of an age," we can perhaps be allowed the conclusion that interesting things are happening to the modern mind. Writers are no longer saying, as the novelist

Literature and Dogma — Continued

E. M. Forster said in *I Believe* a few years back: "I do not believe in Belief." And he added: "My motto is: 'Lord, I disbelieve—help thou my unbelief.'" In fairness to him it must be said that he was thinking of irrational totalitarianisms when he said it. But that is the spirit of the Enlightenment and not the spirit of Religion.

The new spirit, as it comes out in this large segment of the modern literature, is another spirit. Ignazio Silone speaks of it thus: "The rediscovery of a Christian heritage in the revolution of our time remains the most important gain that has been made in these last years for the conscience of our generations." It may be that after four hundred years we are due, not just for a change of thought, but for a change of attitude, not just for a change of mind, but for a change of faith. Even Stephen Spender, a poet of Auden's generation, who does not share in the changing convictions, admits in his book, *The Creative Element*, that the remarkable thing about modern literature is precisely this: "Today there is a reaction towards orthodoxy and the most vital movement in literature in the West is religious."

A Theology of Grace

by JAMES DAANE

I SHOULD like in these passages to restate briefly the thesis of my book *A Theology of Grace* (An inquiry into and evaluation of Dr. C. Van Til's doctrine of common grace). Although the reviews that have appeared provide the reason and background for this re-statement, I shall not directly address myself to any of these. Nor is the intention to repeat the whole argument of the book in brief. My intention is rather to put the spotlight on three of the crucial matters on which the argument of the book turns. In question form, they are:

1. Does Van Til's "mankind as a generality" — the only object to which he allows common grace to extend — have any reality?

2. Is man as a sinner, in Van Til's thought, the object of any grace or favor of God?

3. Is the trinitarian nature of God the explanation of the fact that there are sinful, reprobate men?

Background

VAN TIL'S *conception of common grace* was not conceived in a vacuum. His view was projected as an answer to an exciting theological problem. Before answering the first of the above questions, it will be helpful to take a look at the problem at hand.

In the Netherlands the meaning of common grace was extensively explored along the wide range of human culture and Christian social action. In America the doctrine of common grace had a somewhat different history. Interest here was largely limited to the theological area. It was here that the truth of common grace was first seriously challenged and denied in the interest of sound Reformed theology by Rev. Herman Hoeksema. And it was in America that the doctrine of common grace received its first official and binding formulation. This was done by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 in a formulation popularly known as the Three Points.

Had interest in America attached itself as in the Netherlands to the meaning of common grace for cultural and social matters, the second and third of the Three Points would have been the center of attention. But since the interest in common grace was predominantly theological, Point I became the chief subject of discussion.

Point I teaches that God has an attitude of favor or grace even toward the non-elect whom he does not intend to save, and it adduces the well-meant offer of salvation to all who hear the gospel as (one piece of)evidence for the reality of such a divine attitude.

This truth was asserted against Hoeksema who denied that God has a *common* attitude of favor to both elect and non-elect. Hoeksema vigorously denied that God showed any favor or grace to the reprobate. Even more vigorously he denied that there is a *common* offer of salvation to both elect and non-elect. There is no *common* divine attitude of favor that is *common* to elect and reprobate. God's love, favor, grace is exclusively particularistic, i.e., for the elect alone. The purpose of Point I was to reject this theological position and to posit its opposite.

Now none would deny that we are here confronted with a very real theological problem. If it is the nature of grace to save, then how can we speak of grace being extended to those whom God does not intend to save? And if God intends to save the elect only, how can there be a well meant offer of salvation to the reprobate? The Christian Reformed Church did not attempt to solve such problems, but simply stated in Point I what she believed to be the teaching of Scripture and the Confessions.

Although Hoeksema has never been able to deal with the problem as it emerges in the fact that the gospel must be preached to every creature, he for the rest frees himself from the problem by denying that grace is in any sense common. Unlike Hoeksema, the late Professor Schilder did not deny common grace. He struggled with the problem of how God could have a common favorable attitude toward elect and non-elect. He sought a solution in the distinction between men *as creatures* and men *as sinners*. God, said Schilder, can have a common attitude toward all men because God loves the creatures of his hand. God extends his favor or love to all men as creatures, but he also insisted that there is no such favor of God to men *as sinners*. A man *as a sinner* is simply the object of God's wrath. This was Schilder's solution of the problem, and on its basis he rejected Point I of 1924. For Point I does not distinguish between the non-elect as creature and the non-elect as sinner. It merely distinguishes between elect and non-elect and asserts that both are the objects of a favorable divine attitude.

It is beyond doubt that the Synod of 1924 regarded the non-elect *as a sinner* when it asserted that the non-elect is the object of God's favor. Certainly the non-elect is a sinner as well as the elect. It should be clearly seen that

Schilder's distinction between what *is* the object of God's favor (man as creature) and what is *not* the object of God's favor (man as sinner), is a wedge driven into the core of Point I. Schilder saw this clearly and therefore frankly admitted that he could not accept Point I and openly criticized it.

On the theological basis on which Point I stands, it was hardly necessary for the Synod of 1924 to go out of its way to explicitly assert that the object of God's common grace attitude is the *sinful* non-elect. Yet it would have been helpful had the Synod done so, for the clash between Hoeksema and the theology of the Christian Reformed Church was not merely a difference of common grace or no common grace. The difference lay much deeper, and this depth is not explicitly expressed by Point I. The real difference between Hoeksema and the Synod of 1924 concerns the *nature of grace itself.*

The situation was not that Hoeksema and the Christian Reformed Church agreed fully on the nature of special grace and only differed on the question of whether there is common grace. We should clearly understand this. I think that Hoeksema does. This is evident from the fact that Hoeksema has repeatedly urged that our acceptance of common grace is a distortion (Arminianization) of the nature of grace itself. In short, Hoeksema's conception of grace (special) differs from our conception. And the difference leads him to deny common grace and leads us to affirm it.

What is the difference? We believe that grace is an attitude of God that extends to and embraces man *as sinner.* It is *sinful* man who is the object of God's grace and love. Hoeksema does not. At the bottom or center of Hoeksema's theology lies the theological motif that God's grace does not extend to man as sinner. It is not the sinful man whom God loves; it is not the sinful man who is the object of grace. This motif comes to frequent expression in Hoeksema's theology. It appears when he urges that God hates the sinner and loves only the righteous. It appears when he urges that God loves only the elect *because they*, and they only, *are righteous in Christ.* God does not love the elect as a sinner, but the elect as righteous. It appears when Hoeksema defines God's love as a perfect bond between a perfect subject and a *perfect* object. It appears when Protestant Reformed ministers (of both the conditional and unconditional schools) urge that God did not need to be reconciled to the world (equated of course with the elect) in and through the Cross, because God was eternally reconciled to the elect. God's grace and love do not extend to man as sinner.

This is the difference between Hoeksema's conception of grace and that of the theology of the Christian Reformed Church. This difference necessitated Hoeksema's denial of, and the 1924 Synod's affirmation of, common grace. Hoeksema's conception of grace prohibits the extension of a divine favor to the non-elect, *not* because they are non-elect, but because the non-elect is *sinful.* It is a matter of *justice.* God cannot in justice, says Hoeksema, extend favor to sinful men. Divine justice demands that God love only the righteous in Christ, *because* they are righteous. Love is the perfect bond between a perfect subject and a perfect object.

The conception of grace underlying Point I is basically different: the nature of grace is revealed in the fact that God loved and Christ died *for sinners.* On the basis of this conception of grace, the Synod of 1924 found no difficulty in affirming what it believed to be biblical teaching, namely, that there is a favor of God even for the non-elect who is and remains in his sin.

In the light of this we must understand Schilder's contention that there is a common favor of God but that it extends only to man *as creature* (man as good) and *not* to man *as sinner.* At this point we see a basic affinity between Schilder's and Hoeksema's theologies. Both reject Point I on the basis of a similar conception of grace: Man as sinner is not the object of grace.

And it is in this same light that we must appraise Van Til's criticism of Schilder.

* * *

Van Til rejected Schilder's distinction between man as creature and man as sinner. He rejected it as an abstraction. It abstracts man, he felt, from the historical process, and then regards man as though he were always and everywhere the same. Moreover, urged Van Til, man as creature *apart from* man as sinner is an abstraction *that nowhere exists.* There is in history no such reality as pure creatureliness. Van Til contended that Schilder by means of his distinction defined the object of common grace in such a manner that common grace had *no object.* This was Van Til's criticism of Schilder.

Adherents of 1924 should remember that Schilder put forward this distinction between man as creature and man as sinner as a criticism of Point I, because Point I allowed common grace to extend to man as sinner. And it should be clearly seen that Van Til does *not* criticize or reject Schilder's criticism of Point I. Those who hold to Point I are found to reject Schilder's view that God's common favor does not extend to man the sinner. But Van Til does not do this. It has been said that Van Til explicitly states his agreement with the Three Points. I myself have never found any such statements in Van Til's writings. If there are such, I should be happy to receive the references. But in any event such statements would have to be viewed in the light of the fact that Van Til's criticism of Schilder contains no criticism or rejection of Schilder's position that Point I is in error when it extends grace to man as a sinner. And as will be shown below, Van Til accepts the position that God's common favor does not extend to man as sinner, and thus at this point agrees with both Schilder and Hoeksema and disagrees with Point I.

Mankind as a Generality

VAN TIL criticized Schilder. Does this mean that Van Til was defending the Three Points? The answer is indicated by the fact that Van Til had no criticism of Schilder's basic criticism of Point I.

How did Van Til differ with Schilder? Only in regard to the *kind* of distinction that ought to be made when we define the object of common grace. For Schilder's concept "man as creature," Van Til offered "man as a generality" (sometimes: man as a class, man as a group); and for Schilder's concept "man as sinner" Van Til offered "man as particularized" (man as sinner, man as reprobate, man as elect, man as differentiated).

Thus Van Til (by means of his concepts) offers us a different object of common grace. But so far as the question of grace for man as sinner is concerned, the situation remains unchanged. Instead of man *as creature*, it is man *as a generality* which is now the *exclusive* object of common grace. And so far as grace for man as sinner is concerned, Van Til retains Schilder's

A Theology of Grace — Continued

position: the exclusive object of common grace, namely, man as a generality, is defined as man *in so far as he is not yet sinner, not-yet reprobate, etc.* Only the object of common grace has changed. But the Hoeksema-Schilder conception of grace as that which cannot extend to man as sinner has been retained. Only mankind as a generality (the fountain of "civic righteousness" according to Van Til), man as good, man as not-yet sinner, is the object of God's common favor.

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BEFORE we proceed further, it will be helpful to point out where Van Til obtained his concepts "man as a generality" and "man as particularized." He obtained them from the ontological trinity (God as Triune).

Van Til regards the problem of how God can have a *common* attitude (a common favor that includes the non-elect, and a common wrath that includes the elect) toward men who in the mind of God are particularized into elect and reprobate as but one aspect of the larger problem of universality and particularity. The common grace problem is only one expression of the one-many problem. Hence he devotes the introductory chapter of his book *Common Grace* to an exposition of the Christian conception of universality and particularity — an exposition which is *foundational* to his conception of Science, History, Theology, Philosophy, Epistemology, and to his conception of the problem of common grace. Because God is Universality (One) and Particularity (Tri-Personal), the human race, together with its world and history, is created and patterned according to that Universality and Particularity.

Hence when we speak of the object of common grace we must make a distinction — not indeed as Schilder did between man as creature and man as sinner — but between man *as a universality* and man *as a particularity*. The former is *mankind as a generality*, the latter man as sinner, as reprobate, etc. (or as Van Til formulates the position of Point I, men as men). And because man is, by virtue of his creation by the Triune God, universality and particularity, and because his history is patterned according to the plan of this Triune God (Van Til makes no distinction between the pattern of creation and the pattern of sinful history), this principle of the ontological triune nature of God is said to be the most basic principle of interpretation at every point. The nature of God therefore is the origin of Van Til's two concepts by which he defines what is and what is not the object of common grace, whether in the creation situation or in sinful history.

* * *

By means of these two concepts Van Til thought that he had found at least a partial solution to a problem that faced both the Christian Reformed and the Protestant Reformed Churches: how can one gospel be precahed to both elect and reprobate. The answer — though it cannot be fully understood — is in his view quite simple. There can be a common favor of God (expressed both through "rain and sunshine" and a universal offer of the gospel) *because there is an object that corresponds to this common favor, namely, mankind as a generality. Man* is a commonality, hence God can have a common attitude. The divine attitude has its human object. Thus Van Til claims to have done what Schilder failed to do: provide common grace with a *real* object.

But Van Til thought that he could also by means of his two concepts at least partially solve the timeless and static conception of the object of common grace held by the Synod of 1924, by Hoeksema, and by Schilder. At this point Van Til goes beyond all three. The 1924 Synod's conception of the object of common grace was static for it made no distinctions; it did not say what is and what is not the object of common grace. Schilder made a distinction, but it was an abstract one, and hence static. Schilder viewed man as though he were not in history; his abstract, static object of common grace actually existed nowhere. Hoeksema too overlooked the validity of the historical process for he viewed man as though he already stood in the Judgment Day, as though man were already fully sinner, elect, reprobate, etc.

Van Til sought to overcome the static, non-historical conceptions of all three by asserting that man begins in history as a generality. But the generality is in motion. It is the generality (not an individual man) which is said to have committed the first sin. It is the generality which responds to God's grace, and, through response, progressively differentiates itself into particularized sinners, elect, reprobate, etc. As the generality progressively differentiates itself into particularized men, the generality progressively disappears (and with it common grace which is strictly correlative to the generality) until at the end of history the generality is completely gone and only fully actualized *particular* reprobate, elect men remain.

This is Van Til's answer to the static, abstract, non-historical common grace thinking of the 1924 Synod, Schilder, and Hoeksema. With this answer Van Til thought it possible to make the theology of 1924 and that of Hoeksema meet in essential agreement. By making "mankind as a generality" the object of common grace, he agreed with 1924 that there was common grace, and by conceiving of "mankind as a generality" as being in motion, *i.e.*, progressively differentiated into particularized sinners, reprobates, he could retain the Hoeksema-Schilder conception of grace as that which does *not* extend to men as sinners, as reprobates, etc.

I shall attempt in the next issue of the *Journal* to conclude this discussion.

Humility is the great ornament and jewel of Christian religion; that, whereby it is distinguished from all the wisdom of the world; it not having been taught by the wise men of the Gentiles, but first put into a discipline, and made part of a Religion, by our Lord Jesus Christ . . . : *Learn of me for I am meek and humble, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

JEREMY TAYLOR — *Holy Living*

As Sons of Olivianus-III

by LEONARD VERDUIN

IN THE first article of this series we saw that Caspar Olivianus, after he had heard the Anabaptists at their trials, divested himself of current erroneous opinion concerning them. And we suggested to his spiritual followers, the readers of this *Journal*, to go and do likewise. In our second installment we singled out Adrian van Haemstede, minister of the Refugee Church in London, for similar honorable mention.

We are pleased in this our third consignment to point to still another contemporary clergyman who refused to let other people do his thinking for him touching the Anabaptists, and, even went to bat for them. We refer now to Johannes Odenbach of Moscheln in Bavaria. He wrote a letter of advice to the secular rulers, in 1528, recommending leniency toward the Anabaptists lying in prison. Wrote he, "The opinions which Griff and Leffel and Lorley patch together out of their law books ought not to settle the matter; it must be dealt with according to God's Word. Therefore, dear sirs, do not offend against the divine majesty of God lest a wrath overtake you greater than that of Sodom. . . . You have been more merciful toward thieves and murderers than toward these poor people, who have neither stolen nor murdered, have neither robbed nor set fires, have not committed treason nor any shameful act, but have, to no one's hurt and with good intention, allowed themselves to be baptized a second time. . . . How can you justify it in your heart and conscience. . . . to have them beheaded for this or condemned?"[1]

In this present article we wish to shed a little light upon the ancient slur that the Anabaptists were given to sedition. It will be recalled that the Belgic Confession in its 36th Article, as revised in 1566 (for the original did not specify the Anabaptists), accuses them of this.

* * *

IT WAS a foregone conclusion that the Anabaptists would be suspected of harboring sedition. It was inevitable. Ever since, in the 4th Century, the philosophy had been embraced that if men are to get along on the public scene they must first have agreed at the altar, any person who proposes a religiosity by definition not coextensive with society will be considered a seditionist. A sectary is inevitably seditious in the eyes of him who holds to medieval monolithicism. He does not have to do anything seditious to be in danger of liquidation. It was the logic of this medieval monolithicism rather than any manifestation of seditious tendencies that led men to call for the blood of the Anabaptists; this the sources make quite clear.

It was because the Reformers, one and all, failed to come clear of this medieval philosophy of society that they stopped at nothing to get these awful people out of the way. He who agitated for a believers' church was engaged in sedition. How the Reformers thought at this point can be gathered from their expositions everywhere. A neat sample is that of Justus Menius, Luther's trusted associate. Wrote he of the Anabaptists "Like the Donatists of old, they seek to rend the church because of the fact that evil men are tolerated in the Church; they wish to bring into being a pure church. And when one plans such a thing then the public order is bound to be put to naught." Menius then clamors for the extermination of this seditious lot. And at the end of the whole piece Luther put his "Placet mihi Luthero" ("This suits me fine. Luther").

The reader will have noticed that Menius considered that the Anabaptist clamor for a pure church, that is, a believers' church, one not by definition coextensive with society, was the revival of an ancient pattern. As indeed it was. The issue was already clearly drawn in the days of St. Augustine, the man who did more than anyone else to fix monolithicism upon the mind of European man. This is a strain in Augustine's thought for which we can never forgive him and if properly assessed it will forever dampen our ardor touching him.

The die was cast with the triumph over Donatism. For Donatism was the rebellion launched by a part of the Christian world of the 4th Century at the sight of the other part joining hands with the Emperor and by so doing casting in its lot with monolithicism and all that it entails. It has been pointed out long ago that Donatism began at the moment when orthodoxy became the ally and the protege of the emperors. The Donatists called the catholic churchmen "evil priests working hand in glove with the rulers of this world, men who by their deeds show that they have no king but Caesar." The hatreds that sprang up between the two communions can at any time be measured by the extent of secular interference and intervention in the affairs of the Church. Prior to such interference and intervention the two parties had lived together in peace. They discussed their differences without rancor. Intermarriage was not at all unusual. Members of the two groups entered into all manner of social contact and contract with each other. The disaffection dated from the moment that in the interest of social and political cohesion Constantine took sides (His "conversion" was nothing so much as a decision to make Christianity the "myth" that was to tie his empire together in lieu of the ethnic myth that had lost its ability to do so), so repeating the ancient formula of religion subordinated to the secular prince to be used as a tool in empire-building. The words of Constantine to Cecilian, his righthand man in Africa and the number one enemy of the Donatists, tell the whole story: "Since I have learned that there are persons of turbulent spirit who seek to corrupt the people from the holy catholic church by their dangerous divisions, be it known that I give orders, as with my own mouth, to the proconsul Anulinus and to his vicar Patricius, to watch the matter carefully and not to tolerate dissent. Therefore, if you find anyone persisting in this folly address yourself at once to the magistrates, to the end that they may punish the seditionists in the way I have ordered."

We have given some space to the Donatist movement because it is against this background that we must see that which happened in the 16th Century with the Anabaptists. The two movements are close parallels, as close as any two in history. In both cases the fireworks start when the secular rulers, egged on by clergymen who thought in terms of monolithicism, enter the arena taking sides, in the interest of public quiet as they thought. In both movements a lunatic fringe develops at once, hotheads who go to pieces under the pressures of patent injustice, people who see no way out but to slug

As Sons of Olivianus — Continued

it out (The Circumcelliones were to the Donatist cause what Muntzer and Munster were to the Anabaptist movement. The Wurtemberg theologians already pointed out the parallel, speaking of the Circumcelliones as "ein wusts, erschreckenlichs volck. . . . das die ander leut greulich wurgten"). Both of these laid great stress upon the minimum requirement of a changed life and better-than-standard conduct. Both had strong overtones in the economic sphere. Both accused the orthodox, in chorus, of having sold their birthright for a mess of pottage in the form of secular support (Bullinger wrote to Badian, in 1534, that the Anabaptists say "our church is nothing but a tyranny because we lean upon the arms and the edicts of the Senate," "ecclesiam nostrum nihil aliud esse quam Tyrranidum ut quae armis et edictis Senatorum nitatur"). The parallel was quite evident to contemporary observers. When Urbanus Rhegius, another of Luther's colleagues, wrote against the Anabaptists he gave the following title to his pamphlet: "Widderlegung der . . . Donatisten bekentnus . . ." So much was Anabaptism a *recurrence*, in the eyes of its contemporaries, that they felt no need for *new* legislation with which to strike the Anabaptists; *old* Codes and *old* Edicts were felt to fill the bill satisfactorily. And no wonder. The issue was essentially an old issue, namely, that of monolithicism with all its corollaries, that of the omnibus church vs. a believers' church, that of the propriety or the impropriety of the sword as part of the panoply of Christ's church.[2]

Adolph Harnack has said, very correctly, that "during the twelve centuries that lie between the third and the fifteenth movements aimed at the dissolution of the priest-church and the State-church, and, at the reestablishment of the apostolic congregation-church were never lacking in Christendom." The Anabaptist movement was such a movement. To the extent that the Reformation was out of sympathy with the Anabaptists it was not such a movement. That it was not such a movement is quite evident from the documents. We turn to a few representative ones now.

* * *

By way of documentation let us take this neat statement from the pen of the Reformed minister of the Church at Middelburg, Johannes Seu. Wrote he, in 1601, "How can there be a quiet and a prosperous existence, and how can the country flourish, if the citizens, divided over various misconceptions in religion, do not practice unity and amity? There is no matter as detrimental to the community as is dividedness, variety, and contention in matters of religion. Therefore the magistrates must be at great pains to see to it that false teachings, all heresies and errors are precluded and obstructed; for these are the fountain and the wellspring of all disunity between the citizens . . . This is as evident as the sun in the zenith that uniformity achieved by the sword of the magistrate is the one and only beginning, the middle, and the end, of peace and prosperity in the land." The Reverend Mr. Seu then refers, approvingly, to an Edict published at Groningen in that same year, an Edict intended to make life unbearable, if not impossible, for the Anabaptists.

This leads us to a second piece of evidence for our present thesis, i.e., that our Reformed forebears remained in the toils of monolithicism, and, that it was this fact that inspired them to seek the liquidation of the Anabaptists. Said Edict of Groningen gives another good insight into the thought of the Reformed clergy of those times. For it was drawn up by the Reformed minister *en loco*, Acronius. It provided: "a) that the exercise of all religions other than the Reformed are from now on forbidden; he who is apprehended renting space to Anabaptists, papists, or others, for the purpose of preaching services or meetings shall be fined ten daelders for each infraction, b) anyone caught preaching as per the above shall be fined ten daelders, jailed on bread and water, and, upon a third offence, banished from the city and the areas under its jurisdiction, c) any person apprehended in such services or gatherings shall be fined two daelders for each infraction, d) he who is convicted for rebaptizing shall be fined twenty daelders, be jailed on bread and water, and, expelled, as provided above, e) unbaptized children are hereby declared to be incompetent to receive any inheritance, etc. etc."

In view of the fact that someone might volunteer the suggestion that Mr. Seu was an obscure person (which however he was *not*) and that Acronius was not very important (although he *was*, decidedly) and that therefore these sentiments are not typical, we shall conclude this documentation with a passage from Johannes Bogerman, who was elected to chair the Great Synod a little later, and whom no one will call obscure or a-typical. Wrote he: "Nothing is more necessary toward the welfare of the State and the obviation of disturbances than is the practice of a single religion, seeing that no bond of unity or of fidelity can exist among persons committed by conviction to diverse religions."

This the Anabaptists did not believe. This we do not believe. And the latter is in a large way due to the former. Friedrich Lezius has said very truly, in his study on "Der Toleranzbegriff Lockes und Pufendorfs" that "The Anabaptists drove the Protestant advocates of the State-church to a modification of the Protestant idea of the State, and, have by so doing, suffering and contending, done the Reformation a stupendous service, a service for which they have by no means as yet received, before the bar of history, the thanks which is due them." What J. McGlothlin has written, in his study of the Anabaptists of Berne, seems to us not to admit of rebuttal: "A single glance in retrospect at these views of the Anabaptists reveals the surprising fact that very much of that which these plain people tried for so fervently has been realized in our modern world. History has in many ways justified their objectives. Suppressed on the continent their ideas came to England and thence to America, where many of them in the freer societal relations have contributed their part to the construction of the New World." For, as the great historian Ranke has said, "In Providence and in Pennsylvania the ideas of the Anabaptists . . . found their development." It is not at all surprising therefore that at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Amsterdam, it was left to the *American* delegates to say, "We utterly oppose totalitarianism, wherever found . . . ; in the way we oppose any church which seeks to use the power of the State to enforce religious conformity."

If Europe had listened to the Anabaptists, if the acids of the much maligned "Täufertum" had been allowed to bite into the *Landeskirche* that everywhere resulted from the Lutheran version of monolithicism, then Germany's clergymen would have known Hitlerism for what it was, a hateful reversion to

monolithicism, and would not have played along as they did when the Party let it be known that "a fellowship of the entire people the Church must be, not a fellowship by itself in separate organization; the concern for a separate fellowship has at times diverted the Church from her real God-given assignment, restricts her in the matter even now."[3]

It was into this medieval incrustation that Anabaptists bit, and, out of this grew the slur of "sedition" in the first place. The Anabaptists refused to believe that the office of the magistrate has a place in Christ's church. As late as 1609 it was still being said that there was little hope for correcting the Anabaptists "seeing that they say expressly that they do not consider our Christian magistrate to be a Christian one; they conceive of the magistracy as simply God's servant." This excellent distinction made it possible for the Anabaptists to think in terms of a single magistrate but various religions. It was to be a long time before this opinion received the attention that was its due. When they of the settlement in Providence, Rhode Island, refused to exclude "all Quakers, Ranters and notorious heretics" saying that freedom of conscience was their most prized possession they were told, by the Massachusetts Commissioners, that these doctrines held at Providence were "the very resolute cutting down and overturning of civil government among you."

* * *

ALSO in this matter, i.e., that the slur of sedition was not born of any act or statement but was implied in the logic of monolithicism, we shall let the sources decide. So voluminous is the testimony that one is at a loss as to what to choose and what to reject.

Take the case of Hans Schlaffer. Asked on the witness stand to give an account of what transpired at the Anabaptist conventicles (held in secret of course since to attend one meant possible arrest and then probable death) he said among other things that they prayed there. He even recited a typical prayer (We say "typical" for he uttered virtually the same words elsewhere) that ran as follows: "We also pray Thee for all civil rulers; be pleased to grant them that they may use the sword which Thou hast given them for the protection of the good and the punishment of the evil. Keep them from soiling their hands with the blood of the saints." Asked how he dared to preach without permission of the secular authorities he said, "Christ Himself says . . . that without respect of emperors, kings, princes, or other temporal rulers' permission . . . whose jurisdiction extends not to men's souls but only to their bodies and possessions, Christ always remaining the sole and only Lord . . . therefore He accepted no permission from the rulers of Syria, nor the apostles from the kings and lords of the area in which they preached . . . Would to God that all magistrates knew how true Christians are disposed toward them! Then they would fervently wish that the whole land was full of them. But, alas, I fear they don't believe it."

In this misgiving Schlaffer was right. For the question is shot at him as to "What eventuality and intention lies hidden beneath all this, and under what pretext of rebaptism do you think to raise up rebellion and sedition?"

What could the poor fellow say further? If men refuse to believe solemn testimony what else can be done? In desperation we hear the man cry to his God, "Oh, Almighty God, eternal and compassionate, what shall I say to this, if men refuse to believe me even after the most cruel and fearful pain and torment?" (They had had him on the rack several times already). "I know of no other witness to the truth in my heart than God my Lord and heavenly Father . . . He is my final comfort in my conscience that as old as I am never so much as a word or a thought of rebellion or uprising has come up within me."

It would seem that any respectable court would dismiss its session and let the man go. Not so. At a second hearing they tell Schlaffer, "We demand a plain statement as to what is really at the root of this sect of rebaptizers." The poor man once more takes refuge where it never fails even when all men forsake. "I pray God . . . that I may yet be a true Christian or follower of the Christ — which verily is nothing else than to do the will of God and keep His commandments. Of these the one enjoining obedience to the magistrates is by no means the least . . . How can I be planning sedition and insurrection when by the grace of God and by His help I have determined to live according to the teachings of Christ? . . . I know nothing at all about any insurrection, by myself or by anyone else . . . All I know is that we want to lay aside our old self and walk before God in newness of life." Plainly they have nothing on this man, either in word or in deed; his one and only sin is that he has broken with medievalism and its concept of a monolithic society. This is the situation in countless instances.

Do we have time and space for another case, that of Julius Leuber? The "Nurnberger Gelehrten" report concerning this prisoner, that they have "stretched him three times, he praying God for grace to overcome the 'martyr.'" He is to be asked to state plainly "why he has departed from the pure doctrine of the Gospel as taught by Luther and others at this time, to associate himself with a sect and sedition . . . Therefore something else is hiding beneath all this, namely, to set aside all government and make all possessions common."

The tortured prisoner replies, "God forbid that I should ever be or act contrary to the magistracy, for I know right well that no government can exist without a magistrate. We must moreover be obedient to them, the good and the bad alike." Perhaps there was enough of justice still stirring in the hearts of the secular rulers, who generally know a criminal when they see one? Ah, but the clergy stood behind them to tell them, in the words of Justus Menius again, "When the civil ruler says they are minded to let these people go so long as they do not do anything overt, then they practice mockery of divine things and so demonstrate that they believe neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell." And Menius' colleague Rhegius bolsters this awful doctrine, in the earliest years of Anabapitsm, before there was such a thing as Munster, with: "Where this thing goes no government remains intact." It was a long tradition of theology in which these men stood, one that made them call any dissenting group seditionists; in the language of Matthew of Paris "nutrix et tutrix hereticorum et toti imperio rebellium" (nurturer and teacher of heretics and of rebellion against all civil rule).

"Not guilty as far as we can see; but guilty nevertheless, for the book says so," that is the idiom in which the Anabaptist trials fell, in dreary monotony. Here is the instance of Johannes Nadler of whom the Council at Ansbach testified: "After careful study of Johannes Nadler's statement, and his replies made in connection with it, we find among other things a principal error concerning the body and blood of Christ

. . ." (The Anabaptists rejected transsubstantiation) "but we are unable to find a trace nor can we detect from any reply that he and his associates have actually planned anything against the civil rule or have sought, or at the present time seek, to stir up sedition." But there is added at once, "However it is to be feared that where such illicit associations increase and grow the devil may very easily seduce their hearts and their eyes. . . so that the breach of the common peace and separation from the common Christianity may come about, and, turmoil also in all likelihood." So sure are these judges that he who breaks with monolithicism is *ipse facto* a seditionist that they see sedition even where they themselves say none can be found!

The officials of Schaffhausen say of Hans Brottli, in 1525, "This man has, with his followers, brought the poor people to the point . . . that they have departed from the practice of baptizing newborn children and have also begun to baptize adult men and women . . . whereby manifest disquiet will without doubt arise in our city and country if we do not earnestly avert it, with people assaulted and probably injured in life and limb as well as in their possessions."

The Council of Regensburg knew beforehand that the Anabaptists were seditious — the book said so. It declared solemnly, in 1527, "If this public evil is let go, then at the end . . . out of it will grow . . . the breaking up of the Christian civil order and government instituted by God and bring with it the destruction of all good government and public decency."

An Imperial Mandate of 1528 says baldly, "Since the spirit and intention of many of these Anabaptists is pointed in this direction . . . that under cover of this erring sect of rebaptism all government and public decency as well as all tranquility, civil regulation and government, will be ended, suppressed, destroyed."

The *Kirchenrat* of the Palatinate sums up the whole matter in these few words, "Civil authorities must see to it with all diligence that all gatherings in houses and in forests are prevented . . . for such unlicensed conventicles, no matter how they preach or what they read therein, no matter how good and commendable in themselves, constitute not only schism in the Church but also sedition in the State, give rise to all disobedience and disorder, and, are for that reason not to be tolerated."[4]

* * *

"BUT what of Munster?" I hear some oldtimer say.

We must be brief here — although we would fain be lengthy.

It must be conceded, as we have already said, that Anabaptism showed quite early that it too was to have its lunatic fringe, its Circumcelliones. One of the first to reveal this tendency was Tomas Munster. But it is significant that in their first letter to their newly found fellow, Grebel and his associates tell Munster that they have heard that he has been preaching against the Nobles recommending physical violence; and they tell him quickly, "If this is so then we admonish you by our common salvation to desist from this." Munster was an embarrassment to the bulk of the Anabaptists from the start.

As to Munster we must agree with Toynbee, "The Munster revolt was really a caricature of the movement, which was essentially pacific." Or, with that eminent scholar, George Peabody Gooch, who says, "The tragedy of Munster drew attention to a phase of the movement that was far from being typical of its real nature . . . the outbreak of 1536 must be traced to the oppression which goaded men to madness."

That last word is to be taken literally. No one can read the history of Munster without sensing that we have to do with men who exhibit all the symptoms of "battle fatigue." After all, human nature can usually take only about so much. And he who takes account of all the deviltry practiced on the people of Munster, by the Prince Bishop first of all, will wonder that men's souls stood up as well as they did.

Munster was a mistake, a terribly tragic mistake. It was foolish and wrong to hole up in the city and to open fire on the Bishop's army as it laid seige to it. But we must take into account the fact that this was the man, and these were his soldiers, that had practiced one outrage after another upon these people, had, for example, impounded all Munster's fat cattle as they were being driven to the market, then had informed them of Munster that the release of their cattle was contingen upon their dismissal of the evangelica preachers, men at that time still quit mild and certainly quite peaceful i their views. It was not until the whol winter had elapsed that the Munster ites regained possession of their stocks now in thoroughly emaciated condition

But Munster was not the *cause* of th rigors of persecution practiced on th Anabaptists, as the present writer wa taught once upon a time. Munster wa the *result* of years of hangings, burn ings, drownings, rackings, tortures o indescribable cruelty, practiced agains a people that deserved the protection o the sword that was used against them instead. The treatment meted out to people whose prime sin was that they were born a few centuries too soon wil disgrace the story of Christendom, Prot estant Christendom by all means no excluded, for all time.

NOTES

1. A copy is in the City Library at Munich We translate from photostatic copy.

2. Ever since the Reformation on down t modern times opponents of the omnibu Church have been dubbed "Donatists." Fulle called Brown, the leader of the Brownist a Donatist. And advocates of the Free Churc idea in Germany were styled "Donatisten less than fifty years ago. The word ha meaning only and always, against the back ground of monolithicism with its omnibu church.

3. It is indeed cause for alarm tha such an influential voice as that of Joh Dewey has asked for "A Common Faith. In the name of good Americanism we shoul protest against such return to the thoug patterns of medievalism.

4. These views may be said to be typical formers. Luther's attitude toward the R conventicles may be known from these h words. "Conventicles . . . are by no mean to be permitted . . . And a citizen's duty i when such a non-sent teacher comes to hi before he lets him speak, to inform the polic and tell the local preacher also. If the citize does not do this then let him know that h conducts himself like one disobedient to h government, and, as one who despising h parish priest acts contrary to God, and, moreover himself guilty and of a piece wi the bootleg-preacher . . . to whom one is n to listen, even if they preach the pure Gospe yes even if they are veritable angels a Gabriel himself . . . If he wants to prea or teach, let him show his call and co mission . . . if he refuses to do this, th let the magistrate hand such a scoundrel the proper master whose name is Meist Hans" (that is, the hangman). To the u prejudiced reader this is quite undistinguis able from the ideology that to this d makes evangelical missions in Catholic cou tries so difficult. And it can well be und stood that historians have contended th "Nothing is farther from the truth than t representation that the Reformation was movement in the direction of liberty of co science." (Dollinger)